ROTHBURY
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE

Year ending December 31st, 1908.

Rothbury:

N. SNAITH, PRINTER AND PUBLISHER.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

https://archive.org/details/b30042379

ROTHBURY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31ST, 1908.

ROTHBURY,

February 9th, 1909.

MR. RIDLEY AND GENTLEMEN,

Allow me to lay before your Board this, my thirteenth Annual Report, being for the year 1908.

There were only 17 Births registered during the year, 10 being males and 7 females. Estimating the population at 1,300, this at the very low rate of only 13·0 per 1,000. Your average being 20·8. A good many of the young married people have been obliged to leave Rothbury and seek work elsewhere, owing to the financial depression amongst us. The rate for England and Wales is 26·0. Of these, 6 were registered during the first quarter, 3 in the second, 4 in the third, and 4 in the last.

There were 29 Deaths registered during the year, of which, 3 were tramps who died in the Workhouse, which is in your district. If we exclude these, then, the number belonging to your district is 26 ; this is at a rate of 20·0 per 1,000 per annum, which is heavy and above your average of 17·0. That for England and Wales is 14·7 for small urban areas. Of these 26, 10 were males and 16 females. The number that died during January was 3 ; in February, 2 ; March, 3 ; April, 3 ; May, 1 ; June, 1 ; July, 1 ; August, 2 ; September, 5 ; October, 1 ; November, 2 ; December, 2.

As in many rural and small urban areas, the rate of natural increase to the population continues to decline. As there were only 17 births, while there were 26 deaths recorded, it follows that there was no increase to the population, but a decrease of 9, being at a rate of 7·0 per 1,000 per annum ; whilst the natural *increase* rate for England and Wales is about 12·0 per 1,000 per annum.

It is a matter for great congratulation, however, that none of these infants have died during the first year of their life. Thus your Infantile death rate per 1,000 born is *nil*. That for England and Wales is 124·0. Your previous average was 103·5.

The periods of age at which these deaths took place were as follows :—under 1 year, 0 ; 1 and under 5, 2 ; 15 to 25, 1 ; 25 and and under 65, 10 ; while 12 were above that. Of these latter, 11 were over 70 years of age, 3 of these being over 80, the eldest being 89, a female.

It is very satisfactory to be able to report that there were no deaths due to class 7, classified Zymotic or Epidemic diseases. Influenza caused three. That for England and Wales is 1·26.

Other causes of death were as follow :—**Phthisis** (Consumption) caused 1, which is at a rate of only 0·76 per 1,000 ; your average for the previous 13 years is at a rate of 1·24. **Other Tubercular** diseases caused 2, being one each of Meningitis and Peritonitis. There were none due to other diseases of the chest. **Cancer** caused 4 ; during the 13 years previous, there were 20 deaths in all due to this disease. This is at a rate of 1·18 per 1,000. **Heart Diseases** caused 5 ; this also being the average. **Accident** caused 1 ; a man being accidentally pitched out of a cart, an inquest being held. **Apoplexy** caused 3 deaths, **Senile Decay** 4, and other causes accounted for 3.

The 3 strangers were tramps, who died at the Workhouse. They were all over 70 years of age, and died respectively of Phthisis, Heart Disease, and Senile Decay.

There were 7 cases of Infectious Disease notified ; 6 of these being Erysipelas, and 1 of Diphtheria. Of the **Erysipelas,** one occurred on the face, and 5 on the leg. One was in a male, the rest were females. One was 21 years of age, two others under 55, and three others over 65. All recovered, and none were due to unsanitary conditions. The **Diphtheria** occurred in a child aged 7 years, at the head of the village. He was on a visit here and took ill on June 11. It was a mild attack. With isolation, care, and disinfectants, the disease did not spread, and the child was soon removed home. There were no unsanitary conditions to cause it.

Influenza was very prevalent amongst children during February. The schools had to be closed for a week. It caused the deaths of two children, one with Meningitis, the other with Pneumonia. It also led to the decease of a male, aged 76 years, in December.

Whooping Cough was imported into the district, and assumed an epidemic form. It being eight years since we had it last. It attacked the Infants' Classes and Standards I. and II. of the Girls mostly. These were closed on November 19th for six weeks. Only a few of the cases were severe, and all recovered. Influenza was associated with some of the cases at the same time, and amongst other children also.

Anthrax was found to exist in a carcase sent to Newcastle for sale on March 30th, from the Little Mill. A man living at Rothbury, who cut up the carcase, developed a sore on the arm, and was sent to the Infirmary at Newcastle. He was pronounced to have Anthrax, treated, and returned home well in four days. All possible was cleaned and disinfected or burnt, and no extension took place.

In connection with the death from **Phthisis,** your Board asked me to call at houses where this occurred, and give instructions regarding the disinfecting, &c. I have had leaflets printed, and to still further assist in arresting the spread and infection of Phthisis, have sent some to the Medical Practitioners and asked for their co-operation, by distributing these instructions to

patients and their friends. I have also offered to send more to any address that may be sent to me. They combine instructions as to means to adopt to arrest the spread during the illness, and how to disinfect an infected room afterwards, or on leaving. At the house where this death from Phthisis occurred, they burnt the old bed and carpet, and washed and disinfected the room and all else.

In connection with this subject, there has just come into existence, an Act for the Notification of cases of Phthisis occurring in the Poor Law Medical Service, to the Medical Officer of Health.

Measles occurred at the County Hotel, on August 30th, in a young Naval officer, staying there on a visit. He had left his ship ten days before, where Measles had occurred. He went, with his friends, to the Isolation Hospital, and bore all expenses. The rooms were disinfected and papered, &c., and no further cases occurred.

The **Cow Sheds** were inspected from time to time, and your Inspector and myself found all in order. Three cow-keepers have given up the business, causing more demands on outsiders. I inspected these, and reported to the Rural District, sanitary requirements.

The **Slaughter Houses** (three old ones) were kept clean and tidy. One new one has been built, with practically a new house and shop. All is in order here. At the Board's request, I made enquiry as to the method of slaughter, and found all humanity was observed that could be. None cared for the new explosive way, though all had used it or seen it.

The Upper or Higher Grade School (Sharpe's) has been removed to what was lately the Girls' (Elementary) School. Proper new sanitary arrangements have been added, and better ventilation and light provided. Two trees should be removed to provide more light and ventilation. A girls' playground has been added. This is a great improvement on their old premises. These have been practically reconstructed and very vastly improved, making good and useful hall and rooms.

The Medical Inspection of Schools and Children Act has now come into force, and yours have been satisfactorily inspected, but some children were not presented.

Under **The Factory and Workshops' Act,** I have inspected 21 places of business. Only in one case was a notice necessary. This was a wooden and brick shed, built for a blacksmith's shop. No sanitary conveniences are attached, but are promised. One blacksmith gave up the business, but another has carried it on in the same premises. Two bakers have left the village, and one new one has started ; all in order at this latter place. Thus, in all, the numbers that are in existence remain the same.

The **Isolation Hospital** was used for the case of Measles mentioned above.

The **Water Supply** to the high parts of the village—North and West—has been very successfully laid on by pumping up a supply from good springs at the riverside by means of a petrol engine, which pumps it to a tank on the top of the Rothbury Hill, and is thence distributed in iron pipes. This removes a great and long-felt want. It is done as a private enterprise. The ordinary village supply is good and ample, being also in private hands. A temporary stoppage at South Terrace was soon rectified.

As regards the new **Sewerage Scheme** and purification, an Inspector (from the Local Government Board) held a further enquiry at the Court Room. As a result, the estimates were able to be reduced from £5,500 to £5,250. A good deal of correspondence has taken place, and now sanction has been obtained to raise the money on loan—the chief part for 30 years of repayment. Much endeavour is being made to obtain this at the most reasonable rate of interest.

Plans were passed for the erection of new lavatories and w.c.'s at the Cottage Hospital, as well as at the Higher Grade Schools. Both are satisfactorily done. Also for alterations and buildings, sanitary arrangements, &c., at the Bridge end (old boys' schools). At

Moorside, Whinbank, Storey's, &c., and also from Addycomb Villa and Heatherlea, excellent sewerage has now been laid down, supplying a long-felt need. A faulty drain at the head of the village has been reconstructed. A private drain in Providence Lane was blocked and opened out. The drain behind the Market Place houses was entirely blocked, and opened out, a better connection being placed there ; the ash middens here are still faulty. Mr Detchon has converted a faulty privy into a proper w.c., being a great improvement. A house was reported to me, in the back way, as unfit to occupy. On inspecting it, I found this to be the case. It is not now occupied. There are 20 houses unoccupied.

The Coroner held an enquiry touching the death of the man who fell from the cart.

There were no proceedings before the magistrates.

Your Inspector systematically goes over the district, reporting to your Board every meeting.

I have to thank Mr Bertram, Cragside, for again supplying me with the following table of rainfall and sunshine during the year. This is taken at Cragside, the site of observation being 405 feet above the sea level.

JANUARY		2·72 inches.
FEBRUARY		1·86
MARCH ...		4·85
APRIL ...		3·87
MAY ...		2·37
JUNE ...		0·96
JULY ...		2·63
AUGUST ...		2·68
SEPTEMBER		2·29
OCTOBER		3·15
NOVEMBER		1·68
DECEMBER		1·88
		30·96

Your average for ten years is 38·62 inches. There were 185 wet days, and 1,414 hours of sunshine. Last year, 34·12 inches of rain fell, and there were 1,443 hours of sunshine.

Your obedient servant,

F. BARROW,

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE OF CAUSES OF, AND AGES, AT DEATH, during Year 1908, in Rothbury (Urban) Distirct.

Causes of Death.	Deaths in whole District at subjoined ages.							Deaths in Localities (at all ages).						
	All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards	Rothbury Parish (Rural).	Alwinton.	Whittingham.	Long Framlington.	Alnham and Brinkburn.	Cambo and Elsdon.	Long Horsley and Netherwitton.
Diphtheria														
Epidemic influenza ...	3		2				1							
Enteritis														
Puerperal Fever														
Phthisis (Pul Tuberculosis)	1			1										1
Other tubercular diseases	2		1			1								
Cancer, malignant disease	4					4								
Bronchitis														
Pneumonia														
Premature birth														
Heart diseases	5					2	3							1
Accidents	1					1								
Suicides														
Apoplexy	3					2	1							
Senile decay...	4						4							1
All other causes	3						3							
All causes	26		3	1		10	12							3

Total Deaths of Non-Residents in the District — 0.

TABLE OF POPULATION, BIRTHS, AND DEATHS

In the Rothbury (Urban) District.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births.		Deaths under 1 Year of age.		Deaths at all ages. Total.		Total Deaths in Public Institutions in District.	Deaths of Non-Residents registered in District.	Deaths at all ages. Nett.	
		Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate per 1,000 Births.	Number.	Rate.*			Number.	Rate.*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9.	10	11	12
1891	1192	District formed in 1896.									
1898	1270	33	26·0	2	60 6	26	20·5	...	1	25	19·7
1899	1280	21	16·4	2	95·2	22	17·2	...	5	17	13·3
1900	1290	37	30·8	4	103·1	29	22·5	...	2	27	21·0
1901	1300	27	20·8	4	148·1	26	20 0	...	1	25	19·2
1902	1310	16	12·2	...	...	26	19·9	...	7	19	14·5
1903	1310	35	26·7	3	85·7	22	16·8	...	3	19	18·4
1904	1320	22	16·9	3	115.4	26	20 0	..	2	24	18·4
1905	1330	28	21·0	3	107·1	18	13·5	...	...	18	13·5
1906	1340	24	18·0	1	41·6	20	14·9	...	1	19	14·1
1907	1340	25	18 5	2	80·0	26	19·2	...	...	26	19·2
Averages for years 1898-1907.	1310	27	20·8	2·4	89 0	24	18·5	...	3	22	17·0
1908	1300	17	13 0	..	..	29	22·3	3	...	26	20 0

* Rates in columns 4, 8, and 12 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water) ...	948
Total Population at all ages (1901)	1,300
Number of inhabited houses	293
Average number of persons per house	4·5